

Amendments to the Drawings:

The drawing sheets attached in connection with the above-identified application containing FIGS. 4-6 are being presented as new formal drawing sheets to be substituted for the previously submitted drawing sheets. The drawing FIGS. 4-6 have been amended as discussed below. Appended to this amendment is an annotated copy of each of the previous drawing sheets which have been marked to show changes presented in the replacement sheets of the drawings.

The specific change which has been made to FIGS. 4-6 is to label the figures with the legend "Prior Art" as suggested on page 2 of the Office Action.

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant notes the Office Action's consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement filed on April 5, 2004.

The drawings and claims 1 and 5 stand objected to for minor informalities. Claims 1 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0030846 to Moriyama. Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moriyama. Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By this amendment, the drawings have been amended to correct the minor informality noted on page 2 of the Office Action. Applicant respectfully submits that the drawings, as amended, are in proper form and respectfully request withdrawal of the objection. Claims 1 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter claimed therein. Claims 2 and 6 have been rewritten in independent form as discussed in greater detail below. In addition, independent claims 2 and 6 have been redrafted according to the Examiner's helpful suggestion regarding claims 1 and 5, on page 2 of the Office Action. Applicant respectfully submits that each of the pending independent claims clearly conveys Applicant's invention. Editorial amendments have been made to claim 7 and claim 3 remains unchanged in the application.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier. After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 are now pending in this application for consideration.

THE CLAIMS DISTINGUISH OVER THE CITED REFERENCES

Claims 1 and 5 stand rejected as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Moriyama and claim 4 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Moriyama. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Office Action's indication that claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 contain allowable subject matter. Although Applicant respectfully submits that the invention which is the subject matter of the rejected claims may be patentable over the cited references, Applicant at this time intends to pursue patent protection for the allowable subject matter recited in the claims identified above.

As such, independent claims 1 and 5 have been canceled and claims 2 and 6 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of their respective canceled base claims. The cancellation of claims 1 and 5 and the rewriting of claims 2 and 6 in independent form are not meant to concede to the appropriateness of any of the rejections, but merely to expedite prosecution of the patent application. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 2 and 6 and claims that depend therefrom, namely claims 3 and 7 are allowable as well.

Further remarks regarding the asserted relationship between any of the claims and the cited references are not necessary in view of their allowability. Applicant's silence as to the Office Action's comments is not indicative of being in acquiescence to the stated grounds of rejection.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to

charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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